

## 2021 SAIW bursary recipients announced

Fhumulani Netshakhuma (22) and Palesa Mokoena (28) have been named this year's winners of the South African Institute of Welding's (SAIW) welding student training bursaries worth R120,000 each.



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The bursary will give the two students access to the International Welder Programme over the next 28 weeks and will provide the candidates with an internationally recognised qualification where they are competent in the welding of carbon steel, stainless steel and aluminium material, using the four main welding processes (GMAW, GTAW, SMAW, FCAW).

The course follows an international guideline used across 58 countries and covers two weeks of theory, together with practical welding modules. The winning candidates will exit the course as highly skilled welders with opportunities to diversify into welding inspection, welding coordination or non-destructive testing

### Opportunity in a male-dominated industry

The first of the two bursary winners, 28-year-old Palesa Mokoena was born and raised in Johannesburg. She received her matric at Mbowa College and then had an opportunity to study further via a youth organisation where she opted to do a welding course.

Mokoena says the reason for her choice is that a career in welding presents many opportunities in a largely male-dominated industry. "Given that there are far fewer female welders, I thought why not grab an opportunity to do something different. Once I had completed my initial training, I carried on my studies at the African International Training Facilities in Kempton Park in arc welding."

Following this Mokoena saw a post on the SAIW's Facebook page about the bursaries it was offering for 2021. She applied and sent through her motivational letter highlighting her existing skills, passion for the profession of welding and desire to take part in the bursary scheme.

"Unfortunately, when I sent my email, I forgot to include my cellphone number and I didn't have access to my email for a while so when I followed up with the SAIW, the bursaries had already been awarded. Fortunately, a space opened up after another student had to drop out and I immediately accepted the offer!"



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## Career springboard

The second bursary winner is 22-year-old Fhumulani Netshakhuma who hails from Tsianda in Limpopo and expressed her gratitude for the opportunity this bursary brings in springboarding her future career: "This is a great opportunity for me and I am grateful. I believe it is going to open so many doors for me and give me exposure to international countries. I could never have afforded to study welding and I believe when my community sees me prosper, it will inspire them to reach further."

A friend initially pointed Netshakhuma to the bursary opportunity post on the SAIW Facebook page. Asked where she now sees herself in 10 years, she responds, "I see myself growing within the industry. I would like to study further once I have had exposure to the international welding industry. My dream is to be an engineer."

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